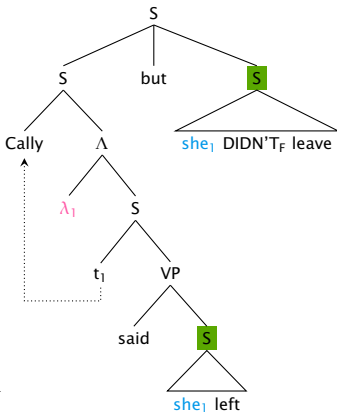
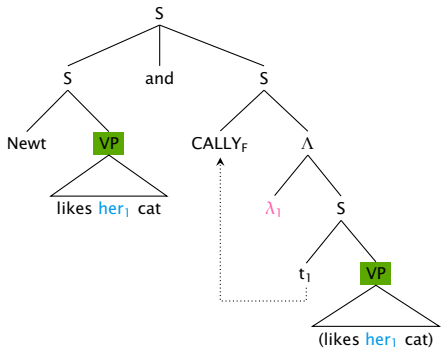


# **Givenness and local contexts**

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*the antinomy of the variable*

Givenness is central to both. I'll make a few closely related claims about it today:

- Givenness is checked **compositionally**, via operators in syntax
- Givenness is **sensitive to the local context (assignment)**
- Constraints that inspect meaning must **leave bound variables *bound***

Take home: it's the *values* of variables that matter (not the little numbers).

- Dissolves puzzles as old as the ellipsis/focus literature
- Allows a simpler theory of ellipsis based on perfect identity
- Independent justification for various refinements of Givenness theory
- Sheds new light on impossible ACDs, focused bound pronouns

## Givenness and anaphora

Damian blocked Steph, and then...

(1) SETH<sub>F</sub> blocked Steph.

just right

(2) \*STEPH<sub>F</sub> blocked Damian.

underfocused

(3) \*SETH<sub>F</sub> blocked STEPH<sub>F</sub>.

overfocused

Schwarzschild's (1999) account of these facts:

- **Givenness:** If  $B$  isn't F-marked, it must be Given  $\rightarrow$
- $B$  is **Given** iff it has an antecedent  $A \cong B := [A] \in [B]_f$   $\rightarrow$
- **AvoidF:** F-mark as little as possible (w/o violating Givenness)  $\rightarrow$

F-mark all, and only, material in  $B$  without a parallel in  $A$ .

$[B]_f$  is the focus set gotten by varying F-marked things in  $B$  (Rooth 1985, Kratzer 1991)

F-mark all, and only, the material in  $B$  that isn't parallel to  $A$ .

Damian blocked Steph  $\cong$  SETH<sub>F</sub> blocked Steph

$\llbracket \text{Damian blocked Steph} \rrbracket \in \llbracket \text{SETH}_F \text{ blocked Steph} \rrbracket_F$

$\text{block}(\text{damian}, \text{steph}) \in \{\text{block}(x, \text{steph}) \mid x : e\} \quad \checkmark$



We need a definition of Given that's explicit about assignments:

$$A \cong B \iff \forall g : \llbracket A \rrbracket^g \in \llbracket B \rrbracket_f^g$$

For *any* way of understanding the free variables in  $A$  and  $B$ ,  $\cong$  holds.

This  $\cong$  treats different indices as different, even if we don't.

That is a problem. Suppose we're in a context where  $g(1) = g(2) = \text{mary}$ .

(4) I saw  $her_1$  and  $YOU_F$  saw  $*HER_{F,2}$ . but  $her_2 \Rightarrow \neq$

(5) I saw Mary and  $YOU_F$  saw  $*HER_{F,2}$ . but  $her_2 \Rightarrow \neq$

Our  $\cong$  *requires* the pronouns to be focused, despite their values in context!

- Forbid 'redundant' assignments (Schlenker 2005)? Names are variables?

Intuitively, meaning **in context** is what matters (Schwarzschild 1993, 1999):

$$A \cong B \text{ at } g \iff \llbracket A \rrbracket^g \in \llbracket B \rrbracket_f^g$$

This makes better predictions when  $g(1) = g(2) = \text{mary}$ .

(6) I saw  $her_1$  and  $YOU_F$  saw  $*HER_{F,2}$ .

$her_2 \Rightarrow \cong$

(7) I saw **Mary** and  $YOU_F$  saw  $*HER_{F,2}$ .

$her_2 \Rightarrow \cong$

$A \cong B$  is checked at the **contextual  $g$** . But this can **unbind variables!**

Even if  $g(1) = \text{mary}$ ,  $\cong$  in the red (though eventually not in the green).

(8) **Newt** likes her<sub>1</sub> cat. \*CALLY<sub>F</sub> [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> likes her<sub>1</sub> cat] too.

(9) **Steph** hopes I cite him<sub>1</sub>. \*SETH<sub>F</sub> [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> hopes YOU<sub>F</sub> cite him<sub>1</sub>].

Unintuitive... but ok? No: in (10) Givenness is satisfied, period!

(10) Cally [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> said she<sub>1</sub> left] but \*she<sub>1</sub> DIDN'T<sub>F</sub> leave.

Empirics aside, this is *weird*. Bound variables *have values in their local contexts* (though from the ‘outside’ the idea that they have values may seem strange, cf. Fine 2003, 2007). Givenness as currently stated **discards** those values.

Consider: presupposition satisfaction is checked in a local context:

(11) If there’s an escalator in 18SEM, **the escalator in 18SEM is hidden**.

(12) Each of these students<sub>*i*</sub> brought **their<sub>*i*</sub> laptop**.

If the congruence constraint was a kind of presupposition (as has often been proposed), it would be surprising if it was not also checked ‘in situ’.

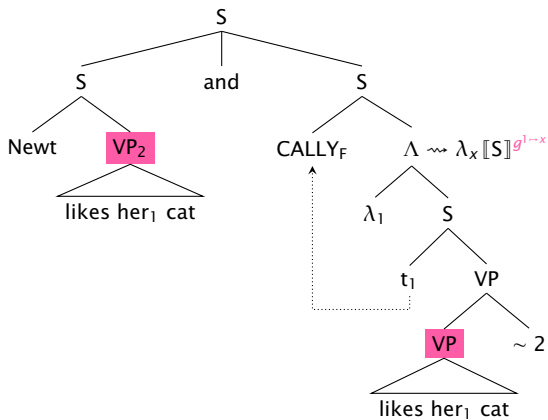
There is an alternative. Rooth's (1992a)  $\sim$  works in situ, requiring its associate  $B$  to be congruent with the value of a variable  $n$ :

$$\llbracket B \sim n \rrbracket^g := \begin{cases} \llbracket B \rrbracket^g & \text{if } g(n) \in \llbracket B \rrbracket_f^g \\ \text{undefined} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

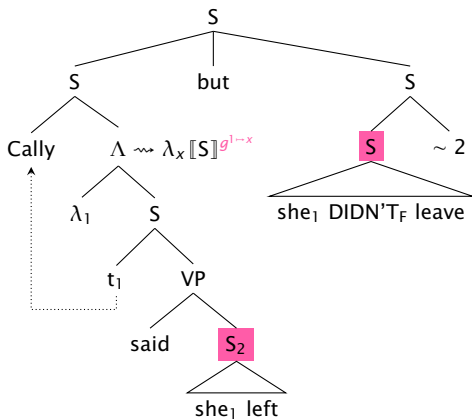
$B$  and the  $\llbracket A \rrbracket$  stored at  $n$  may be eval'd at **different assignments**.

Rooth doesn't treat  $\sim$  as a Givenness operator. But it can be repurposed as one.

I'm adopting a semantic theory of alternatives for concreteness, but these points apply equally to syntactic theories of alternatives (Katzir 2007, Fox & Katzir 2011).



$\llbracket \text{likes blue}_1 \text{ cat} \rrbracket^{1 \mapsto \text{mary}} \notin \llbracket \text{likes her}_1 \text{ cat} \rrbracket_f^{1 \mapsto \text{cally}} \#$



$\llbracket she_1 \text{ left} \rrbracket^{1 \mapsto \text{cally}} \notin \llbracket she_1 \text{ DIDN'T}_F \text{ leave} \rrbracket_f^{1 \mapsto \text{mary}} \quad \#$



We update Schwarzschild (1999) so that Givenness is checked in situ:

- **Givenness:** If  $B$  isn't F-marked, it must be Given  $\rightarrow$
- $B$  is **Given** iff it is the sister of  $\sim$   $\rightarrow$
- **AvoidF:** F-mark as little as possible (w/o violating Givenness)  $\rightarrow$

Akan data due to Augustina Owusu (p.c.):

- (13) Kofi re-pa Kwame ho.  
Kofi PROG-pass Kwame body  
'Kofi is overtaking Kwame'

Deebi! KWAME na ε-re-pa KOFI ho no.  
No! Kwame FOC 3SG-PROG-pass Kofi body DEF  
'No, KWAME is overtaking KOFI.'

*No*, though usually treated as DEF marker (cf. Renans 2018), can mark Givenness.

We stand in need of one more revision:

(14) Steph [ $\lambda_1$   $t_1$  liked  $his_1$  shot] and  $SETH_F$  [ $\lambda_2$   $t_2$  liked  $his_2$  shot].

While  $\cong$  is met in the green, it isn't in the red! (Very much like 'rebinding'.)

$$\llbracket his_1 \text{ shot} \rrbracket^{1 \mapsto \text{steph}} \notin \llbracket his_2 \text{ shot} \rrbracket_f^{2 \mapsto \text{seth}} \quad \#$$

Givenness must be weakened, on pain of being unsatisfiable:

- **Givenness:** Non-F-marked  $B$  must be Given, or dominated by a node that is  $\neg$

This is a new argument for something similar to "Maximize Background".

The basic patterns are reproduced with indexical expressions:

(15) (I'm the best.) No, I<sub>F</sub> am! / Yes, you are.

But there is a striking disanalogy in *index-dependency*.

(16) In '92 the president was a Bush. \*In '04 [the PRESIDENT]<sub>F</sub> was a Bush.

Givenness relates *meanings* via  $\sim$ . We've seen ample evidence that the meanings of pronouns (indexicals) saturate the assignment (context).

Data like (16) suggest meaning doesn't saturate the index:

$$\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c,g} = \dots \lambda_{(w,t)} \dots \quad \text{not} \quad \llbracket \alpha \rrbracket^{c,g,(w,t)} = \dots$$

## A better theory of ellipsis

Ellipsis requires identity.

(17) I saw an elk from France. Did YOU<sub>F</sub> (see an elk from France)?

(18) I saw her, but YOU<sub>F</sub> DIDN'T<sub>F</sub> (see her).

**Sloppy** readings are easy to accommodate:

(19) Mary [ $\lambda_i t_i$  likes her<sub>*i*</sub> office], but SUE<sub>F</sub> DOESN'T<sub>F</sub> ( $\lambda_j t_j$  like her<sub>*j*</sub> office).

Sag characterized *A* and *E* here as 'alphabetic variants', a relation inspired by the  $\lambda$ -calculus notion of  $\alpha$ -equivalence (though distinct).

Sloppy pronouns don't need to be bound inside  $E$  ('**rebinding**')

(20) John<sub>*i*</sub>'s mom likes him<sub>*i*</sub>. BILL<sub>F,*j*</sub>'s mom DOESN'T<sub>F</sub> (like him<sub>*j*</sub>).

(21) Bagels<sub>*i*</sub> [I like t<sub>*i*</sub>]. DONUTS<sub>F,*j*</sub> [I DON'T<sub>F</sub> (like t<sub>*j*</sub>)].

(22) Every dog<sub>*i*</sub> thinks I like it<sub>*i*</sub>. Every CAT<sub>F,*j*</sub> thinks I DON'T<sub>F</sub> (like it<sub>*j*</sub>).

(23) If I see a cat<sub>*i*</sub> I pet it<sub>*i*</sub>. If I see a DOG<sub>F,*j*</sub> I DON'T<sub>F</sub> (pet it<sub>*j*</sub>).

Same range of interpretations available under deaccenting. Givenness is implicated.

See Hirschbühler 1982, Evans 1988, Jacobson 1992, Rooth 1992b, Hardt 1993, Fiengo & May 1994, Tomioka 1999, Takahashi & Fox 2005, and many others.

## Two-part theory of ellipsis licensing

(Rooth 1992b)

Ellipsis is licensed whenever the following two conditions are satisfied:

- Syntactic:  $A \approx E$                       Syntactic identity **up to variable names**[?]
- Semantic:  $\Gamma[A] \cong \Delta[E]$                        $A$  and  $E$  are (in) **congruent** structures

Note that  $\cong$  is the **ex situ** congruence relation.



$$\text{John } [\lambda_1 t_1 \text{'s mom likes him}_1] \cong \text{BILL}_F [\lambda_2 t_2 \text{'s mom does (like him}_2)]$$

$$\text{likes}(\text{mom}(\textcolor{violet}{j}), \textcolor{violet}{j}) \in \{\text{likes}(\text{mom}(\textcolor{violet}{x}), \textcolor{violet}{x}) \mid x : e\}$$

Binding in the elliptical clause guarantees that congruence is satisfied.

In general, the interaction of binding and alternatives creates complications (Poesio 1996, Shan 2004, Romero & Novel 2013, Charlow 2019b). This won't affect any of my points.

Hard to oversell how successful, illuminating this approach has been.

- Congruence is a feature of grammar not specific to ellipsis (Schwarzschild 1999, Büring 2016, cf. Tancredi 1992, Fox 1999).

The syntactic condition is unfortunate (Merchant 2001), in tension with other data.

Something akin to congruence is present even in dissenters from the overall Roothian picture (e.g., Merchant 2001, Kehler 2000, building on Hobbs 1979).

Why not just coindex the sloppy pronoun and its correlate in A?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Mary}_1 [\text{t}_1 \text{ likes her}_1 \text{ office}] &\cong \text{SUE}_{F,1} [\text{t}_1 \text{ does (like her}_1 \text{ office)}] \\ \text{likes(m, office(m))} &\in \{\text{likes(x, office(x))} \mid x : e\} \end{aligned}$$

Actually, this needs to be *ruled out*:

- (24) Newt likes her<sub>1</sub> cat and \*CALLY<sub>F</sub> [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> does (like her<sub>1</sub> cat)] too.
- (25) Steph hopes I cite him<sub>1</sub> and \*SETH<sub>F</sub> [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> hopes YOU<sub>F</sub> (cite him<sub>1</sub>)].
- (26) Cally [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> said she<sub>1</sub> left] but \*she<sub>1</sub> DIDN'T<sub>F</sub> (leave).

## No Meaningless Coindexing (NMC)

(Heim 1997: 202)

If an LF contains an occurrence of a variable  $v$  that is bound by a node  $\alpha$ , then all occurrences of  $v$  in this LF must be bound by the same node  $\alpha$ .

- Sag defined a sense of ‘ $\alpha$ -variance’ distinct from  $\lambda$ -calculus, to similar effect.
- Like bans on redundancy, trying to get variables to be less variable-like.

Sag 1976, Tomioka 1995, Romero 1998, Sauerland 1998, 2004, Kennedy 2004, 2014, Takahashi & Fox 2005, Takahashi 2006, Hartman 2011, Roelofsen 2011, Crnić 2017.

The difficulties here are entirely due to using an **ex situ**  $\cong$ .

They vanish with an in situ congruence mechanism, e.g.,  $\sim$ . The LFs generating impossible readings cannot satisfy  $\sim$ . There is no need for NMC.

(27) Newt **likes her<sub>1</sub> cat** and CALLY<sub>F</sub> [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> does **#(like her<sub>1</sub> cat)**] too.

(28) Al **hopes I cite him<sub>1</sub>** and BO<sub>F</sub> [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> **#hopes YOU<sub>F</sub> (cite him<sub>1</sub>)**].

(29) Cally [ $\lambda_1$  t<sub>1</sub> said **she<sub>1</sub> left**] but **#she<sub>1</sub> DIDN'T<sub>F</sub> (leave)**.

Getting rid of NMC means we can require exact identity in ellipsis,

(30) John<sub>i</sub>'s mom likes him<sub>i</sub>. BILL<sub>F,i</sub>'s mom DOESN'T<sub>F</sub> (like him<sub>i</sub>).

Why might we want this? Ellipsis *sites* exhibit variable-like behavior.

(31) When John has to cook, he doesn't want to (cook).

When he has to CLEAN, he doesn't (want to clean) either.

(32) John bought the books he was supposed to (buy \_).

But he READ the books he WASN'T (supposed to read \_).

Strongly suggests that an anaphora-like process undergirds ellipsis resolution But anaphora is a relation based on *exact identity* (of meaning).

The dynamics of ~

What does it mean for  $A_n$ , the antecedent of  $B \sim n$ , to bear an index?

- Could mean  $A_n$  binds  $B \sim n$
- Could mean the two are merely coreferential

Treating B's Givenness in situ via  $\sim$  speaks in favor of **binding**.



Intuitively the second conjunct counts as Given in light of the first:

(33) Every boy<sub>1</sub> said [Seth likes him<sub>1</sub>]<sub>2</sub> and [STEPH<sub>f</sub> likes him<sub>1</sub>] ~ 2.

Yet this is impossible if ~ and its ‘antecedent’ are merely coreferential. That requires there to be a contextual value for 2 such that, for any boy  $x$ :

$$g(2) \in \{\text{like}(y, x) \mid y : e\}$$

The focus set varies with  $x$ ! No single value for  $g(2)$  can do all this work. [At best,  $g(2)$  will be ‘about’ one of the relevant boys.]

If *Seth likes him<sub>1</sub>* **binds**  $\sim 2$ , the value of 2 shifts boy-by-boy:

every boy  $[\lambda_1 \dots [\text{Seth likes him}_1] [\lambda_2 \text{ t}_2 \text{ and } [\text{STEPH}_f \text{ likes him}_1] \sim 2]]$

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| a | likes(seth, a) |
|---|----------------|

$$g(2) \in \{\text{likes}(x, a) \mid x : e\} \quad \checkmark$$

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| b | likes(seth, b) |
|---|----------------|

$$g(2) \in \{\text{likes}(x, b) \mid x : e\} \quad \checkmark$$

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| c | likes(seth, c) |
|---|----------------|

$$g(2) \in \{\text{likes}(x, c) \mid x : e\} \quad \checkmark$$

Givenness/~ are often said to be *anaphoric* (Rooth 1992a, 2016, Schwarzschild 1999). Treating ~ in situ forces us to take this seriously.

The occurrences of ~ in (34) and (35) are *donkey pro-forms*.

(34) If [a cat<sub>6</sub> [Mary likes t<sub>6</sub>]<sub>5</sub>] you can bet that [SUE<sub>F</sub> LOVES<sub>F</sub> it<sub>6</sub>] ~ 5

(35) If [[the copier or the fax]<sub>7</sub> [you use t<sub>7</sub>]<sub>8</sub>] [I<sub>F</sub> CAN'T<sub>F</sub> (use it<sub>7</sub>)] ~ 8

So ~ participates in the same binding configs as pronouns (cf. Partee 1973).

Some extensions

On the other hand, whereas binding seems sensitive to linearity (roughly), it's well known that  $\sim$  satisfaction can be cataphoric (Rooth 1992a):

(36) An AMERICAN<sub>F</sub> farmer was talking to a CANADIAN<sub>F</sub> farmer.

Brasoveanu & Szabolcsi (2013) argue that this shows  $\sim$  imposes itself *after* the sentence has been composed — i.e., is 'post-suppositional'.

(37) A-mo hashitta. 'A ran away too'

(38) A-mo B-mo hashitta. 'A and B ran away'

To get a flavor for post-suppositions, let's consider a paradigm use-case: marking dependent interpretations (Henderson 2014, Kuhn 2017, Law 2018).

(39) Every boy saw a movie. Some even enjoyed it.

(40) Every boy saw a-RED movie. (Requires multiple movies seen.)

The context reflects the dependency between boys and movies seen:

|       |       |                 |
|-------|-------|-----------------|
| $b_1$ | $m_1$ | } 3 assignments |
| $b_2$ | $m_2$ |                 |
| $b_3$ | $m_3$ |                 |

This dependency can be anaphorically retrieved as in (39), or required to **post-suppositionally** yield multiple movies, as in (40).

(41) I saw  $t_i$  [the man  $\text{YOU}_F$  did (see  $t_j$ )] $_i$ .

(42) I saw  $t_i$  [a book about the man  $\text{YOU}_F$  did (\*see  $t_j$ )] $_i$ .

Heim (1997) proposes to explain the data as a failure of  $\cong$ .

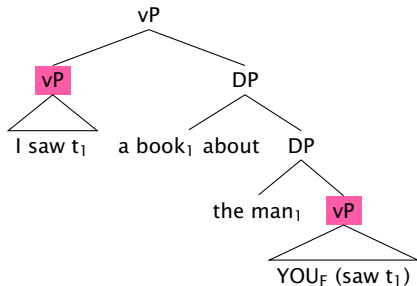
(43) [I saw  $t_i$ ]<sub>n</sub> [the man<sub>i</sub> [YOU<sub>F</sub> did (see  $t_i$ )]  $\sim n$ ].

(44) [I saw  $t_i$ ]<sub>n</sub> [a book<sub>i</sub> about the man<sub>j</sub> [YOU<sub>F</sub> did (\*see  $t_j$ )]  $\sim n$ ].

I saw  $t_i \not\cong$  YOU<sub>F</sub> saw  $t_j$ , whence the ungrammaticality of (44).

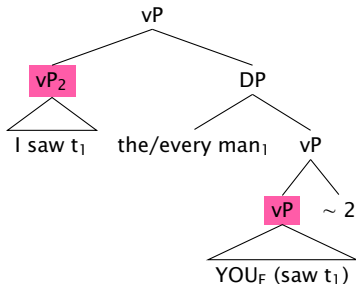
Ex situ  $\cong$  relies on variable names, and thus on NMC (to avoid spurious  $\cong$ ).





There is no way for  $\sim$  to relate the vPs, even with coindexing: the first trace evaluates to a book; the second trace evaluates to a man.

But how is  $\sim$  satisfied in the *good* cases? A configuration like the one below looks good at first, but remember that  $\sim 2$  needs to be bound!



The DP necessarily binds into  $vP_2$ . How can  $vP_2$  bind  $\sim 2$ ?

Recall from earlier that  $\sim$  satisfaction can be symmetric. As Brasoveanu & Szabolcsi argue, this suggests that  $\sim$  satisfaction is post-suppositional.

(45) An AMERICAN<sub>F</sub> farmer was talking to a CANADIAN<sub>F</sub> farmer.

(46) A-mo B-mo hashitta. 'A and B ran away'

Notably anticipatory stress is common (obligatory?) in ACD:

(47) I<sub>F</sub> read everything YOU<sub>F</sub> did.

$\underbrace{[\text{John read } t_1]}_2 \quad \underbrace{[\text{everything}^1 \text{ MARY}_F \text{ did (read } t_1)]}_{2 \sim 3}$

|   |            |                      |   |
|---|------------|----------------------|---|
| a | read(j, a) | {read(x, a)   x : e} | ✓ |
| b | read(j, b) | {read(x, b)   x : e} | ✓ |
| c | read(j, c) | {read(x, c)   x : e} | ✓ |

Should  $\sim$  require satisfaction in every row (assignment), or would something weaker be appropriate?  
 The weaker notion could be consistent with the head-identity effects noted by Sauerland (1998, 2004).

- (48) Every third grade boy likes his mom.  
And every FOURTH<sub>F</sub> grade boy likes his mom.
- (49) Every third grade boy likes his mom.  
And every FOURTH<sub>F</sub> grade boy likes HIS<sub>F</sub> mom.

What is the focused bound pronoun contrasting with?

In light of the non-focused variant, why isn't this overfocusing?

$\overbrace{\text{Every TGB}^1 [t_1 \text{ likes his}_1 \text{ mom}]}^5$ .
  $\overbrace{\text{Every FGB}_F^3 [t_3 \text{ likes HIS}_{F,3} \text{ mom}]}^{5 \sim 6}$ .

$\underbrace{\hspace{10em}}_2$ 
 $\underbrace{\hspace{10em}}_{2 \sim 4}$

|     |       |     |                     |     |
|-----|-------|-----|---------------------|-----|
| a   | moma  | d   | {mom d, mom a, ...} | ✓   |
| b   | mom b | e   | {mom e, mom b, ...} | ✓   |
| c   | mom c | f   | {mom f, mom c, ...} | ✓   |
| ... | ...   | ... | ...                 | ... |

$\underbrace{\text{Every TGB}^1 [t_1 \text{ likes his}_1 \text{ mom}]}_2$ .
  $\underbrace{\text{Every FGB}_F^3 [t_3 \text{ likes his}_3 \text{ mom}]}_{2 \sim 4}$ .

Wrapping up



Congruence is a compositional, anaphoric, dynamic process.

Indices matter a lot less for ellipsis and deaccenting than thought. They help determine values for variables. But it's the *values* that are important.

Facilitates big simplifications in grammar (e.g., no NMC), exact-identity-oriented theories of ellipsis (at last!), and offers a fresh perspective on some old facts.

Thanks for listening!

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